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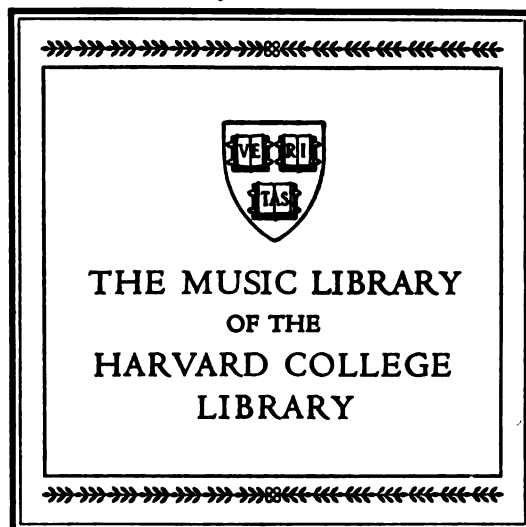
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OPERA SINGERS

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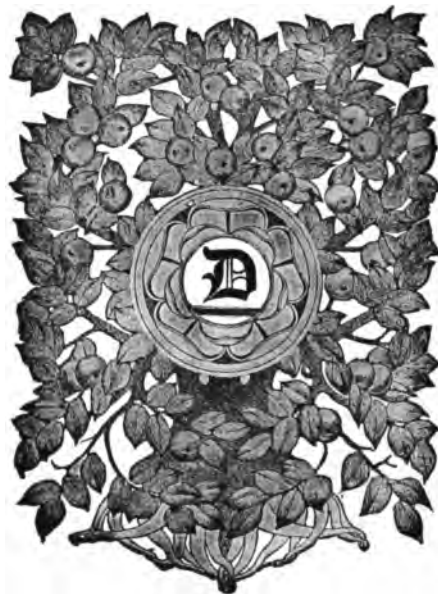
THE OPERA SINGERS

OPERA SINGERS

A PICTORIAL SOUVENIR

WITH BIOGRAPHIES OF SOME
OF THE MOST FAMOUS
SINGERS OF THE DAY

BY
GUSTAV KOBBE



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FOREWORD

THIS being the sixth edition of "Opera Singers" the book would seem to be fulfilling its purpose as a pictorial souvenir. My endeavor has been to gather here a series of costume and other portraits of the grand opera singers best known to American opera-goers of to-day. To these pictures I have added biographies of some of the famous singers — biographies which may be regarded as authentic because many of the data were courteously furnished by the singers themselves.

AMONG the biographies there appear for the first time in this work those of Geraldine Farrar, Olive Fremstad, Johanna Gadschi and Mary Garden; — singers who have definitely established their position in the world of Grand Opera. The Caruso biography has been extended.

LEST the above should not fully explain the limitations as well as the scope of the book, I desire to disclaim any attempt at a critical work. Let me repeat that it is intended foremost as a pictorial souvenir. As such it is believed that the illustrations, many of them from the studio of Aimé Dupont, the Mishkin studio and others, form the most complete and interesting collection of its kind obtainable.

GUSTAV KOBBE.

New York, 1913.

To
MRS. RAYMOND DEMOREST LITTLE
(Beatrice Kobbé)

ENRICO CARUSO

ENRICO CARUSO, who made his American début on the opening night of the first season of grand opera under Heinrich Conried's management at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in 1903, is the first tenor to be heard in this country since Campanini was in his prime who seems destined to take that great artist's place.

HIS voice is of unimpeachable tenor quality and faultlessly placed. It is ringing and vibrant, and conveys a sense of ample reserve power which gives the hearer faith in its staying qualities. Yet it is sweet and expressive, and even when used pianissimo carries to the remotest seats in the house. Caruso has a nice taste in acting, keeping well within a rôle, yet never forcing the dramatic as against the musical side of a character. He is of the best type of Italian tenors, and few artists have made a greater individual success here than he.

IL DUCA in "Rigoletto" was the rôle in which he made his American début. It would be difficult to imagine *La donna e mobile* sung better than he gave it. Seated at the table in *Sparafucile's* hut, he tossed up the playing cards while he sang the air in the nonchalant, devil-may-care way which suits it precisely. The cadenza he gave in brilliant style. His success with the audience was immediate. Later he confirmed it in "Lucia" and in "L'Elisir d'Amore," in which his singing of the romanza, *Una furtiva Lagrima*, created a genuine furore. The first time he was heard here in "Lucia" the demonstration on the part of the audience after the sextet, when the tenor seemed unwilling to have the number repeated, became so noisy that the policeman in the lobby grabbed his nightstick and started for the auditorium, fearing there was a panic. Before he reached the swinging doors there was sudden silence, for at that moment Vigna, the conductor, had rapped on his desk for the encore. The newspaper accounts of this demonstration were not exaggerated, for I was present and saw and heard it.

CARUSO is about forty years old. He was born in Naples, where his father was a mechanic. He himself became a mechanic and worked at his trade until the value of his voice was discovered. He was a good, industrious mechanic, too; and when he gave up the work, he was receiving two lire a day (about forty cents), a good wage for Italy. As a boy he sang





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in church, and continued doing so after his voice became tenor. The highest pay he received was the equivalent of three dollars for eight services.

VERGINE, the singing master, chanced to hear him, and, recognizing the fine quality of his voice, at once took him as a pupil. His début was made in 1896 in "Traviata," at the Fondo, in Naples, and was very successful. But his real artistic career began with his appearance in 1898 at La Scala, Milan, where, on his reappearance, when he was heard in the first performance of Giordano's "Fedora," an Italian critic wrote, "*Caruso canto Fedora e la Fe—d'oro.*" ("Caruso sang Fedora—'made of gold'—and made it of gold.") After that he sang with continued success in Italy, South America, and Russia, and, in the summer of 1903, in Covent Garden, London. Then he reached the golden Mecca of all opera singers' hopes, the Metropolitan Opera House.

IN spite of his great success he is a modest man, punctillious in the due observance of stage etiquette toward his colleagues and very popular with them as well as with his managers. He has very handsome dark eyes and, though a trifle stout for an impressive stage appearance, has an agreeable personality that makes itself felt across the footlights. He has a clever knack at drawing caricatures. His manager, between whom and himself there is great good will and harmony, having criticised his costumes, he drew a caricature of the impresario, whose trousers he made ridiculously big. Underneath it he wrote that the trousers were so ill-fitting because they were drawn by him, and he was such a bad dresser that he could not even draw clothes well. He has been decorated by the Kings of Italy and Portugal, but rarely wears his orders. Caruso created here (December, 1910), the rôle of Johnson in the Puccini-Belasco opera, "The Girl of the Golden West."

THE manner in which Mr. Conried came to engage Caruso is most interesting. When he became Grau's successor he made up his mind that the time was ripe for a revival of interest in Italian opera. But where was the tenor for the experiment. It must be remembered that Conried had not been an impresario, but an actor, and after that the manager of a German stock theatre. It is an actual fact that even Caruso's name was unknown to him. So he began his search for a tenor, and mark how cleverly he went about the matter. HE argued that if you were to ask almost anybody you met on Broadway who the leading American actor was, the answer would be Mansfield. By analogy he concluded that there must be some Italian tenor so far above his fellows that any and every Italian asked for the name of the greatest living Italian

tenor would answer with the same name. So he put on his hat and walked up Broadway. The impresario (as yet without a company) strolled along until he came to a neat-looking bootblack stand, seated himself there, and proceeded to procure an unnecessary shine, all in the interest of art and himself. The proceedings having reached that stage when Tony was applying the paste, the impresario asked casually, "Who is the greatest Italian tenor?"

TONY looked up, and without hesitation answered, "Caruso."

THE impresario returned to his office and pondered. He asked one of his assistants if there were anything relating to Caruso in the office records. A contract was discovered between the tenor and Grau for the following season, but Grau's retirement had vacated it.

CONRIED pondered again. Suddenly it occurred to him that there was an Italian savings bank in the city, and forthwith he again put on his hat, walked to the corner of Broadway and jumped on a car, jumped off again at Spring street and walked in the direction of the Bowery until he saw the bank's sign in gold lettering.

CONRIED introduced himself to the president of the bank, Mr. Francolini, and then asked him who was the greatest living Italian tenor.

"Caruso," said Francolini. "And what is more," he continued, "the secretary of our bank, Mr. Simonelli, knows him and can tell you all about him."

THE upshot was that, after a chat with Simonelli, who also knew the singer's agent, the secretary of the bank was authorized by the impresario to conclude an engagement with the tenor by cable. Thus the dictum of a bootblack was the first step in the coming to this country of one of the greatest singers we have had here.

EXCEPTION has been taken to what I have written here concerning Caruso's engagement, but it was told me, word for word, by Conried himself, who was aware that it was to be printed in this book.

CARUSO'S immediate success signified that the long looked for Italian tenor at last had "arrived."

CURIOSLY enough there never had



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been a break in the succession of prima donnas. Sembrich already was a growing favorite when Gerster prematurely lost her voice. Christine Nilsson, one of the queenliest singers that ever trod the boards, married and retired; but Nordica, Eames, Melba, appeared to take her place, while Calvé established a distinct genre of her own. Even in German opera, when Lehmann passed her prime, Nordica had acquired the Wagnerian repertoire, Ternina came upon the scene; and Fremstad and Gadske were establishing themselves. Meanwhile, before Caruso's début, one tenor, Jean de Reszke, held the centre of the stage. But he was not an Italian tenor. It is true that

Tamagno came over here and bellowed some high notes, but we had grown beyond that sort of thing. The significance of Caruso consists, therefore, in his being the first great Italian tenor to appear here since Italo Campanini broke down, died of a broken heart and was laid at rest beneath the soil of his beloved Tuscany.

CARUSO is a great artist because he is a perfect exemplar of the art of *bel canto*, which, since the days of the great teacher Porpora, as far back as the eighteenth century, has given distinction to the pure Italian style of singing. It means the art of beautiful song, of so emitting the voice that none of its beauty is sacrificed in the process, and that, even in the most dramatic phrases, it conveys the stress of the dramatic situation to the audience, without impairing the smooth, round quality, the sensuous charm of the vocal tone.

AS the result of a beautiful voice trained in the best school, Caruso's singing has the effect of being absolutely spontaneous. The entire absence of ap-





parent effort is one of the most grateful attributes of his method. It seems a pleasure, in fact second nature, for him to sing. His voice is a wonderful organ—lusciously sweet, yet capable of swelling to a great volume of tone; powerful, vibrant when occasion demands; veiled with pathos or brilliant according to the character of the music; now sweet and low, a musical stage whisper carrying to the farthest limits of the auditorium, now ringing with the brilliancy of trumpet tones above the *ensemble*—capable, in fact, of responding to every demand of every kind that can be made upon a great tenor voice. His high notes, even when flung out as if in sheer bravado, are never forced or strident, but always musical; and the sense of reserve power which he conveys, even when he has worked up a superb vocal climax, a feeling that he is in no danger of overdrawing his vocal bank account, sets the audience at ease as regards any possible *contretemps*, and enables the listener to give himself up wholly to the thrill with which this voice strikes home.

THERE could be no better demonstration of the art of song than Caruso's delivery of the *Donna e mobile* in "Rigoletto" and of the charming romance, *Una furtiva lagrima*, in "L'Elisir d'Amore," compositions wholly different in kind, yet each sung by him in precisely the manner best suited to it. The *Donna e mobile* is a light, bright, graceful composition—Mozartian in its grace, in fact—yet requiring a certain dash and verve to bring out its true significance. Caruso sings it in the easy, debonair spirit of the cavalier, who wrecks human hearts for amusement, and ends it with a brilliant cadenza, for which he has been criticised because it is not Verdi's, yet which undoubtedly adds to the effectiveness of the number. (So far as this cadenza not being Verdi's is concerned, neither is the universally accepted, nay demanded, high C in "Trovatore.") *Una furtiva lagrima* is the very opposite of *Donna e mobile*. It is one of those broad, smooth-flowing melodies in the composition of which the Italians excel. It is sung by Caruso with unimpeachable beauty of tone and phrasing and with an impassioned burst of sorrow at the end that never fails to thrill the audience. In fact, to use a colloquial ex-





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ENRICO CARUSO

pression, Caruso's voice "has thrills in it," and a thrill is a valuable commodity in a voice. Lest I should be deemed over-enthusiastic, I hasten to add that there is one detail in this artist's method which I do not commend—a tendency in certain profoundly pathetic passages, as in the "Pagliacci" aria, to produce a weepy quality of tone. On the stage of Latin countries this is considered a legitimate effect and is highly valued. It does not, however, appeal to Anglo-Saxon audiences, for the reason, probably, that, with the Anglo-Saxon, the man who weeps does not count for much.

IT is not necessary that an Italian opera singer should be a great actor; for in Italian opera singing is considered the prime essential. A Salvini with only a fair voice, would not achieve the results in Italian opera that a person with small ability as an actor but gifted with a fine voice can. Voice and *bel canto* are the main considerations. These Caruso has and he also possesses a nice regard for the histrionic proprieties of opera, never forcing a situation to a point at which it detracts from the importance of the musical score. On the other hand he is far from being stiff or mechanical, and he may be said to be a good actor as the art of acting is understood upon the Italian operatic stage. I am now speaking of those operas which end tragically. In lighter works, like "L'Elisir d'Amore," his comedy is capital; and, indeed, he shows himself a natural comedian in moments of relaxation both on and off the stage.

NO one who was present on the occasion will forget a rehearsal of "Lucrezia Borgia" when Caruso, weary of the tragedy which haunts that opera, suddenly in a spirit of irresistible high-jinks, began going through his death scene as if he had swallowed every kind of patent medicine known to man. His grimaces, his contortions, his kicking up of the heels were funnier than any studied burlesque of opera possibly could be. The prima donna was the first to give up trying to go on with her rôle, and began to laugh. Soon the people in the wings were shaking. Then the conductor laid down his baton and held his sides. Finally every one in the house, including the newspaper men in the auditorium was, like the figure on the stage, in convulsions.

THE tenor has an attractive personality. Even when he is on the stage something comes across the footlights to make you realize that he is a nice fellow. One of his great charms as an opera singer is his utter lack of self-consciousness. That he is most punctilious in observing every rule of etiquette toward his colleagues is well known. Being a tenor *per grazia di Dio* such a thing as professional jealousy is not in his repertoire.

HE is, in fact, a most unassuming, agreeable man; and the essence of good nature on and off the stage. His vein for the comedy in life often finds vent through his remarkable knack at drawing caricatures to which I have already referred and which he sketches with great rapidity. At rehearsal, while waiting in the wings to go on, he will take his pencil and a long strip of paper, and draw caricatures of some of the people on the stage. At dinner he amuses himself and the company by sketching portraits of his guests on the backs of menus, which those, fortunate enough to secure them, are glad to carry away as unique souvenirs. At one dinner he drew life-size heads of those at table on the table cloth, which became a portrait gallery in itself.

CARUSO resides in Florence, where he has purchased the Casa Cavalcanti, the former residence of a family whose members were friends of Dante. He has another home in the country, near Florence. This picturesque country seat he calls "La Panche" (the bench). His dining-room windows command a beautiful view, and he also enjoys looking out upon the fine prospect from a flight of stone steps in his garden which lead past a grotto. To sit among the flowers and plants of his ample garden is, in fact, one of his great delights, though, sometimes, instead of sitting, he takes his physical culture exercises outdoors. A notable feature of the grounds is a well which dates from the time of the ancient Romans. He has a fine stretch of *campagna* on his place, and there are times, when he whose voice has swayed thousands, does not scorn to work in the fields and woods.



GERALDINE FARRAR

GERALDINE FARRAR'S home is in Berlin, Germany. Her address is the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. As she was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, she may be described as a Yankee girl with a German home, an American address and a reputation for vocal charm and personal attractiveness wherever opera is sung.

WHEN in 1906, this American girl appeared, for the first time in this country, at the Metropolitan Opera House, she was only twenty-four years old. Yet for five years she had been a leading soprano at the Royal Opera, Berlin, and had made successes elsewhere. She was only nineteen when, in 1901, she made her début in Berlin.

IT is not surprising that, in spite of her youth and inexperience, her success was immediate. The fact is that, while Germans accept an artist because he is an artist, even if he be personally unattractive, they are not indifferent to physical charm and are delighted if in addition to the necessary artistic qualifications, a singer, especially, of course, a prima donna, has personal beauty. For six years I lived in a German city that boasted one of the leading opera houses of the country. The principal soprano rôles were sung by a short, thick-set woman, whose stoutness made her appear slightly hunchbacked. To her sometimes were entrusted parts that called for ethereal personal charms; and because she was an artist, the fact that she was physically grotesque as the heroine of almost any opera, was overlooked. To the audiences of that opera house, however, Geraldine Farrar would have appeared like a ravishing dream and though accepted primarily because of her voice and acting, she also would have been hailed with enthusiasm because of her beauty.

AS to her Berlin début, probably the oldest Berliner could not recall having seen on the stage in a leading rôle a prima donna so young, of such obvious charm, and physically so well suited to the character she was interpreting. Here was a *Marguerite* who was not far too mature in appearance for the rôle, but actually had the youth and beauty that should go with it, yet so rarely do. True, the voice was not as well established as it would become with greater routine, nor the performance as settled as it would be after more experience; but there was voice, ample and of great freshness and beauty, while the acting showed innate





mimetic qualities. And so Berlin recognized what, some years later, the New York public welcomed in Miss Farrar—an original creator, whose work has the haunting charm that draws an audience to an opera house again and again.

BY personal charm therefore, I imply far more than mere beauty or girlish grace. Youth and beauty and voice are three great gifts; yet they would not have sufficed of themselves to make Miss Farrar a leading soprano of the Royal Opera House, of Berlin, before she was twenty.

GERALDINE FARRAR'S position on the operatic stage is unique, a tribute to a personality fairly radiating that most illusive quality called—charm. In the world of art, as of men, the overmastering force is personality. There must go with it the technical powers of the finest kind to do the work, but no technical skill ever obtains the hold on the great public which brings success without those qualities of heart and temperament which the world has always fought over, sought to analyze, and been forced to recognize under the baffling term of magnetism. Whatever this may

be, Miss Farrar has it in unique degree. The critics may point out weaknesses in her technical equipment, which she will admit most freely, yet when her name is on the bills a crowd of people always rushes to the opera house, and there must be a reason. People do not spend five and six dollars a seat, night after night and year after year, except for cause.

IT must have been her winsomeness that procured for her certain privileges, when she made her début in Berlin. At the Royal Opera the language was German. Miss Farrar hardly knew a word of it at the time. But, what is most exceptional, the management permitted her to make her début in Italian, and gave her two years to perfect herself in the language. She knew that she was only fitted for the French and Italian operas, and the management agreed further to let her sing only those works that suited her. The fact is she came at a fortunate moment. To quote her own words: "The Royal Opera was in a rut and in need of a novelty. It was just possible





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GERALDINE FARRAR IN MADAMA BUTTERFLY



that I might be the one. In any case I was not being paid enough to break the Royal Treasury if I failed." WHEN she went down to the first rehearsal they thought she was crazy, and she knew they were. Everything on the stage in those days had been worked out to a system that was maddening. "You had to stand exactly on one spot, then so many steps to the right, do precisely such a thing at such a moment, and never move so much as an eyelash unless it had been previously passed on by the Royal Commission." Well, none of that for Miss Farrar! How was she to know what she might want to do when the time came? So she had it out then and there, whereupon the stage management threw up its hands, saying that the crazy American would only last for a performance, and there was no use bothering. Miss Farrar found they had stock costumes for the artists, with *Marguerite's* gowns made big enough, with seams turned in half a yard, so they could be let out or tucked in to suit anybody up to two hundred and fifty pounds. She went to the manager who by that time was afraid to death of her, not knowing what kind of a *fera naturae* he had to deal with, and told him she must have individual costumes and be permitted to pick them out herself. He

would have promised anything so long as she did not bite him, and they all waited with fear and trembling for the bomb to explode. But she still is a member of the Royal Opera of Berlin and has to ask leave to come to this, her native country.

BEARING in mind that her début occurred in October, 1901, and that at the time she was only nineteen years old, it will be realized that although now but thirty-one, she has been a reigning prima donna for twelve years, her popularity in Berlin and elsewhere on the Continent having been quickly won. This prima donna, young in years, but mature in artistic experience and accomplishment, being a leading prima donna of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York; a member of the Royal Opera House, Berlin; a Royal Chamber Singer in the Kingdom of Prussia; and annually a distinguished "guest" in various important European opera houses, was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, near Boston, February 28, 1882. Her father, Sydney Farrar, was in his day a famous baseball player; and though baseball has nothing in common with music, it develops





the valuable quality of quiet confidence in one's self, a quality that accounts for at least some share of the success won by Sydney Farrar's daughter. At four she sang to an audience; at twelve she appeared in an amateur performance in the Melrose City Hall; at thirteen she was singing in concert in Boston, difficult pieces like *Una voce poco fa* from "The Barber of Seville" and the *Polacca* from "Mignon."

SHE studied voice in Boston with Mrs. J. H. Long. Charles A. Ellis, to whose attention she was brought, secured her a hearing from Mme. Melba, and it was upon the latter's assurance of a brilliant future for the girl, that Miss Farrar's mother took her to Emma Thursby, in New York, then to Victor Capoul, in Washington, for lessons in interpretation, and then abroad.

HER first teacher there was Trabadello in Paris, but shortly afterwards she went to Berlin and studied there first with Graziani and later with Lilli Lehmann whom she still considers her mentor in all things musical. After her first appearance in opera in the Royal Opera House, Berlin, as *Marguerite* in "Faust," October 15, 1901, she was engaged as a member of the permanent company.

She has sung in the Royal Theatre, Stockholm, the Im-

perial Theatre, Warsaw, the Prinz Regenten Theatre, Munich, in Monte Carlo, where she created the leading part in Mascagni's "Amica" and *Margarita* in Saint-Saëns's "L' Ancêtre," at the Grand Opéra and Opéra Comique, Paris, the Imperial Opera House, Vienna, and elsewhere.

HER first appearance in New York was at the Metropolitan Opera House, November 26, 1906, as *Juliette*, in Gounod's "Roméo et Juliette." Since then she has sung in opera in many American cities and also in concert.

BESIDES the parts already mentioned as having been created by her, she has created *Zepherine* in Camondo's "The Clown," Opéra Comique, Paris, April 26, 1906, and she is the original creator of the rôle of the Goose Girl in Humperdinck's "Koenigskinder," her exquisite interpretation of the rôle being largely responsible for the lasting vogue of the opera here. She created *Madama Butterfly* in Germany and *Ariane* in "Ariane et Barbe-Bleue" in America.

I HAVE pointed out that Miss Farrar has a personality quite her own and a voice with its own distinctive charm



and spell. Mme. Lehmann, who in her long stage career had seen and heard innumerable singers, knew the value of individuality and cautioned Miss Farrar against ever allowing anyone to persuade her to interpret a rôle contrary to her own instinctive conception of it. "You are a queer child, Geraldine," said Mme. Lehmann, "with a personality that must be its own salvation and you never will gain anything by copying others." This has proved to be true. "What I am, of good or bad, it is myself," says Miss Farrar.

FROM her father, the baseball player, Miss Farrar may have inherited another characteristic besides that quiet confidence in herself that has given her so much poise throughout her youthful career. It is known that baseball players do not accept with Christian meekness the adverse decisions of umpires. Miss Farrar has shown similar resentment when any one has sought to "umpire" between her and what she considers the proper interpretation of a rôle.

THERE is little doubt but that, when the present régime at the Metropolitan Opera House—now so popular—came in, it did not understand operatic conditions here completely and underestimated both Miss Farrar's hold upon her public and that it was due to the highly individual quality of her artistic temperament; in other words, that the public adored Geraldine Farrar, because she was Geraldine Farrar, looked like Geraldine Farrar, sang like Geraldine Farrar, and acted like Geraldine Farrar. There was more or less friction, and finally the climax came at a rehearsal of "Madama Butterfly," Toscanini conducting, Miss Farrar singing her famous rôle. Toscanini is by nature and training a dictator in things operatic; Miss Farrar is a "star," with all the privileges—and responsibilities—the term implies. The rehearsal came to a place where, for special effect, Miss Farrar made a big retard, ending with a long hold. Toscanini carried the orchestra right along without a pause. Miss Farrar stopped singing. Toscanini halted the orchestra. After a brief silence, pregnant with suppressed feeling, the prima donna walked down to the footlights. "Mr. Toscanini," she said, "People come to the Metropolitan Opera House to look at the front of my face, not at the back of your head." The rehearsal was dismissed.

FOR nearly all that season Toscanini refused to conduct when Miss Farrar sang, but each of them was too fine an artist to permit any such condition to continue, so with one thing and another, first one taking a half-step, with the other coming forward to meet, it was all patched up.

THIS is the last place in which any attempt should or will be made to belittle Toscanini's qualifications as a conductor. That often misapplied word, "great," is correctly used in connection with his achievements. But, frankly, a prima donna who draws the audiences Miss Farrar does—she and Caruso being *the* drawing cards at the Metropolitan—is more essential to the success of an opera season than a great conductor. Miss Farrar could well feel sure of her ground; and though the umpire—Toscanini—"called the game," it is worth recording that the prima donna has made many "hits" since then and with no one's greater approval than his. He probably agreed with Lehmann, that "Geraldine is a queer child," and lets it go at that.

ANOTHER incident of Miss Farrar's beginnings as a prima donna in this

country, was an interview, so worded that it might be construed either as a plea to the public to bear with her shortcomings on account of her immaturity, or as a subtle attack upon certain other singers in the company who were jealous of this young prima donna's ever increasing favor with her audiences.

"THERE are," she said in this interview, "certain pinnacles that cannot be reached except by long climbing. You cannot accomplish at the beginning of your career what you are able to do ten or fifteen years later. The problem now interesting me is this: Is the public interested in watching the slow unfolding of a young singer's talent, or must it have everything offered to it fried brown and curled at the edges? . . . They have been accustomed to getting their talent full-blown, ripe from the European opera houses. Is there a place as well for the exuberance of youth that has not yet arrived? I feel like a baby amongst my colleagues, and naturally ask that question of myself frequently."

THE subtle sarcasm of this interview lay in its last sentences. For in excusing herself on the plea of being so young, Miss Farrar drew attention to the fact that many prima donnas by the time they have acquired the equipment or routine of some of the great rôles, have also attained to an age at which they no longer are able to look them. That "fried brown and curled at the edges"; that talent "full-blown" and "ripe"; that reference to her own "exuberance of youth"; that feeling "like a baby amongst her colleagues";—one can imagine the atmosphere behind the scenes after that interview. The most maddening thing about it was that it was worded as an apology for youth, and no other prima donna could take exception to it without, by implication, admitting that she was one of the singers, "full-blown" and "curled at the edges," to whom Miss Farrar referred.



OLIVE FREMSTAD

OLIVE FREMSTAD was born in Stockholm, Sweden, her father being Norwegian, her mother Swedish. Quite soon after Olive's birth the family removed to Christiania, Norway; and there all her early childhood was spent. It was a fine healthy childhood too, full of outdoor life and exercise. To this day the prima donna remembers rowing out on the bay and sitting astride a bell buoy and fishing for eels. She was then about eight years old.

FOUR years later the family came to America. After a few months spent in Chicago, they went to St. Peter, Minn., near Minneapolis. Both mother and father were practicing physicians, but in addition the father had become an active missionary in the Methodist faith. Through this, Olive early in life was given a keen sense of the dramatic and musical. Even as a very little girl in Norway, and later in America, she was taken about by her father to religious meetings to play the organ and thus aid him in securing converts; and, of course, she witnessed many emotional scenes on these occasions. At that time, she was still so small that pieces of wood had to be fastened to her feet to enable her to reach the organ pedals.

ANOTHER experience of those early days stood her in good use in her career as prima donna. For she was taught at a tender age the value of grinding work; her father, once having decided that she was to become a musician, keeping the child at her practice so long and so hard every day, that some of the neighbors sought to interfere, thinking that she was being cruelly treated. Music, however, was natural to her from the beginning and she does not remember ever having been obliged to learn to read notes. Her father's purpose in making her practice so hard was to assure her facility with her fingers. Long before this, however, she had made her earliest semi-public appearance. For at the age of three in Norway, she had been lifted to a table and had stood there singing for a social gathering. For this performance she received her first honorarium—a chocolate horse, from which she promptly bit off the head, and was spanked for her thoughtlessness. She also gave lessons on the pipe organ when she was such a mere child that one of her pupils paid her by giving her a large doll.

NOTWITHSTANDING the long hours and practice, Olive Fremstad's





memories of life in St. Peter, on the wide prairies, are among the happiest days of her life. In her early teens the family, which then consisted of two boys and three girls, of which she was the eldest, moved into Minneapolis. Here the future prima donna supplemented her giving of music lessons by singing in as many churches as was possible on one Sunday. At this time, she also made her first bow from the stage, taking the part of *Phoebe* in a local representation of "Pinafore."

SOON her powers of song began to equal her instrumental accomplishments. In 1890 she came to New York, where she took singing lessons, paying for them by playing the accompaniments for the other pupils. Before long she was engaged as the soprano of the quartet in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

The following year saw her touring the

eastern states in concert. Two years later, 1893, she went to Germany, where she became the pupil of Lilli Lehmann. The latter part of 1894 she received an invitation to sing at the Gürzenich concerts in Cologne, under Dr. Wüllner. The result of her appearance there was an offer from the musical faculty of the city to become a member of the Cologne opera; and there in August, 1895, she made her grand opera début as *Azucena* in "Trovatore." Her engagement at Cologne was succeeded in the season of 1896 by an invitation to sing in the festival performances at Bayreuth. She not only took part in these, but also appeared in various other cities, including Amsterdam and Antwerp. In 1899 she sang *Brangäne* at the Royal Opera House, Vienna, with Lilli Lehmann as *Isolde*. This same year she went to Milan to study Italian and other branches of her art; and in 1900 she was engaged for the Royal opera at Munich. THERE she made a great reputation for herself in several rôles. But in the minds of the Munich people she became most closely associated with the rôle of *Carmen* in which she made a great success. Students, after the German fashion, often would wait at the stage door, unhitch the horses from





OLIVE FREMSTAD



her carriage and themselves draw it to her home after the performance, waiting beneath her window until she waved a goodnight or threw them some of her flowers. In Munich she remained until the summer of 1903. During this time she was decorated by the French government, as Officier de l'Académie for singing the rôle of *Véronique* in the opera of that name. Some years later she was made an Officier de l'Instruction Publique, for singing *Salome* in Paris. She also appeared during her Munich engagement at two Covent Garden seasons in London. It was here she first sang her great rôle of *Venus* in "Tannhäuser," and was heard by Maurice Grau, who engaged her for the Metropolitan Opera House.

SHE has been here every season since, creating the rôle of *Salome* when Richard Strauss' opera of that title had its one performance at the Metropolitan Opera House, in 1907. In 1910 she was the *Armide* in the revival of Gluck's opera of that name. She is of course associated in the public mind with many of the great Wagnerian performances at the Metropolitan; and last summer she returned to Munich to sing at the festival plays there the three *Brünnhildes* in the "Ring" and *Isolde*.

I once asked Madame Fremstad which rôle was her favorite. "Well," she answered, "when one has lived for them and worked so hard for each one, one is apt to love them all. A mother rarely has a favorite child. But perhaps I love *Isolde* the best, for she is the greatest. By this I do not mean greatest as a woman, for *Brünnhilde* is that, but the greatest rôle, in its difficulties, its intricacies, and its possibilities."

AS to her method of studying a rôle, it is very hard to say just how she does it, it is almost a psychological process. She always learns the words first because she must know exactly what it is all about, then fits the words to the music. She is not content until the two, perfectly welded, become a part of herself;—and, as she is so thorough a musician, she knows every note played in the orchestra, and the parts of all those singing on the stage with her. The growth and development of her rôles by her, with repeated appearances in them—something every one notices—are perhaps results of her constant dwelling with them. I don't believe there is ever a moment



working into his composition. "It is to that end I struggle along, eating my little midnight suppers of oatmeal porridge and apple sauce after returning from the opera, following the meal with a bit of reading to quiet the nerves. At such times my philosophical friends—Schopenhauer, Plato, Nietzsche, Marcus Aurelius and Herbert Spencer—help me when overwrought by an evening of hard work. A bit of fiction then is like candy to a fretful child, while my philosophers make me feel level-headed and ready to sleep."

MME. FREMSTAD herself accords much of her success to the instruction she received from Lilli Lehmann, whom she considers a past mistress of vocal and dramatic art and acknowledges as her only operatic instructor.

THIS great woman's art and life have been, in Mme. Fremstad's opinion, the best possible influence in her career. Taking lessons from the great dramatic prima donna, the young artist found that what counted for the fortunate learner in the Lehmann studio was not what the great prima donna said by way of instruction, so much as the actual demonstration of her ideas which, with her superb conception of dramatic music and her unsurpassable manner of interpreting it, she was able to give.

MME. FREMSTAD has deliberately broken with certain traditions of opera in America, especially with the injunction which she received from several older and more experienced artists. "Never create a rôle in America," they cautioned her. "Whatever débuts you make, let them be in Europe. Make your reputation for success in them over there and bring the reputation of that success back with you to America." Yet Mme. Fremstad made her first appearance as *Kundry* in "Parsifal" and *Sieglinde* in "Die Walküre" in New York; and was highly successful with them, the same being true of other rôles which she has sung here for the first time.

IN few artists since Ternina's day has the individual development of a rôle in the hands of a prima donna been as interesting to watch as in the case of Mme. Fremstad. Back of her art is an actively working brain, and responding to that brain is a splendid voice, a fine physique and beauty and expressiveness of feature. No prima donna could take her art more seriously than does Mme. Fremstad. It is to this seriousness of purpose combined with great natural gifts, that her success may be attributed. Nor, in the nature of things, can a success so won be ephemeral. It rests on too secure a foundation. An instance of mind, art and perseverance applied to progress in a career, is the manner in which she gradually developed her voice from a mezzo to a fine, broad, expressive dramatic soprano, capable of singing rôles which lay much higher than, during her first season here, her voice would have been credited with ever being able to compass. A great artist, indeed, is Olive Fremstad.

JOHANNA GADSKI-TAUSCHER

ALTHOUGH Mme. Gadski has been before the public of this country for about eighteen years, she apparently still has a long career before her. This is due to the early age at which she began her public appearances. When, a full-fledged prima donna, she made her American début in New York as *Elsa* in "Lohengrin," under the direction of Walter Damrosch at the Metropolitan Opera House, she was still in her early twenties. Of the prima donnas who are intimately associated with what may be called modern operatic history in New York, it is unlikely that any of them made their American débuts at so youthful an age as Mme. Gadski, except Mme. Sembrich, who was with the company at the Metropolitan Opera House, when that house was inaugurated thirty years ago under the direction of Henry E. Abbey.

JOHANNA GADSKI-TAUSCHER was born June 15, 1872, in a suburb of Stettin, Germany, where her father was postmaster. She was the daughter of Julius and Bertha (Degner) Gadski. Her education she received in the principal private school of her native town, and was graduated there in 1888.

AS a child she sang constantly while at play. It is said that, when she was about seven years old, a musician in the orchestra at the opera, who lived in the house back of her parents' and had heard her singing when at play, finally called upon her mother and told her that the child had a remarkable voice, but would ruin it if she were allowed to go on using it without instruction. As a result, he was permitted to take young Miss Gadski to Frau Schröder-Chaloupka, one of the most widely known singers and teachers of the day in Germany. The latter accepted her for a pupil and continued to instruct her in the art of tone production for twelve years.

ALREADY in 1889, however, she had acquired sufficient proficiency to appear in opera, so at least thought Engel, the regisseur of Kroll's Theatre, in Berlin, who heard her sing at a concert in Stettin, and at once offered her a contract. At first she declined, for she had never entertained the idea of a stage career. But at last he prevailed upon her to accept a provisional contract with the result





that she made her début at Kroll's Theatre as *Undine*, in Lortzing's opera of that name. Although but seventeen years of age, her success with the public was so remarkable that Engel engaged her for all the following seasons till 1893 inclusive. During this period she sang leading parts in many of the standard operas, including *Pamina*, in "The Magic Flute," *Donna Elvira*, in "Don Giovanni," and *Agathe*, in "Der Freischuetz," and appeared with such artists as Lilli Lehmann and Marcella Sembrich. In 1894 Mme. Gadski made an extended concert tour through the principal cities of Germany and Holland and also sang in the Royal Opera House in Berlin. It was there that Walter Damrosch heard her and was so favorably impressed with her singing that he immediately made her an offer of an engagement in the United States. This she accepted, and on March 1, 1895, made her American début in New York, as *Elsa*, in "Lohengrin," winning immediate favor with the public. During the following two seasons she continued as one of the most prominent members of the Damrosch-Ellis Opera Company, constantly increasing her répertoire meanwhile and gradually progressing from the lyric to the heavier dramatic parts in opera.

IN 1898 Mme. Gadski became a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company then under the management of Maurice Grau, and upon the latter's retirement in 1903 renewed the engagement with his successor, Heinrich Conried. These years were the most important in her career up to that time. They brought and kept her before what is probably the most critical, as it certainly is the most spoiled, operatic audience in the world; and put her in touch with many of the greatest artists of the day, from whom, in spite of her great natural gifts, she must also, even if unconsciously, have absorbed much. The high artistic quality of her performances throughout this period served constantly to advance her in public favor and to assure her a place as one of the leading prima donnas. During 1899, 1900, 1901, engagements at Covent Garden, London, alternated with her



New York seasons. In 1899 she appeared as *Eva*, in the performance of "Die Meistersinger" at Bayreuth. She also added materially to her European reputation by her appearance in the performances of "The Ring of the Nibelung" at the Wagner festival in Munich, 1905 and 1906, which secured her the distinction of having King Ludwig's Order for Art and Science bestowed upon her by Prince Regent Luitpold, of Bavaria. Her portrayal of the *Countess* in "The Wedding of Figaro" also aroused great enthusiasm in Munich.

IN May, 1904, Mme. Gadschi severed her connection with the Metropolitan Opera House, and devoted two seasons exclusively to transcontinental tours, appearing both as soloist with the principal orchestras of the United States. In the latter she gave her fine rendition of songs of many other operas, and in a style characteristic of each. RESUMING in 1907 her connection with the Metropolitan Opera House as the principal dramatic soprano of the company, she now divides her time between operatic and concert work, both of which she performs to great success. While her repertoire includes all the most important parts of the standard operas, her most important work has been as a Wagnerian prima donna in rôles, save *Kundry*. In three *Brünnhildes* in "Siegfried," and *Eva* in "Die Meistersinger"; *Eva* in "Die Meistersinger," and *Isolde* in "Tristan und Isolde." Her impersonations of Wagner's heroines may well be regarded as authoritative, their arduous dramatic work that shows no trace of laborious preparation.



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Her voice is of exceptionally pure and vibrant quality—an admirable medium for the expression of supreme emotion, and her commanding presence and dignity of bearing complete a finely balanced equipment.

MME. GADSKI was married in Berlin, Germany, November 11, 1893, to Hans Tauscher, of Berlin. They have one daughter, Charlotte. Despite her vocation as a great artist, she is a woman of thoroughly domestic tastes, beloved by her family and friends and happiest in their company.

THIS prima donna does not believe that the art of singing is declining, on account



of the emphasis on dramatic interpretation required by modern rôles. A singer, she argues, is not a creator but an interpreter, and is compelled to interpret what composers have written and enlightened public opinion has found acceptable. Both a singer and her style, Mme. Gadski is convinced, must be modified by the epoch in which she lives. The forms in which "Traviata" and "Lucia" are written would not be used by the composers of today; and although these operas long will continue to be revived, they will be heard less and less frequently as the modern style of operatic composition gets a firmer hold on the attention and taste of the public. Their growing infrequency of performance does not, however, imply a decline in singing, so much as a change in public taste from the purely lyric to the dramatic.

AS Mme. Gadski views these operas they are worth prolonged and arduous study, not as an end but as a means. The end with her is to apply the art of *bel canto* gained by that study to the singing of modern dramatic music. This training, she holds, corresponds to the training in classic literature given in the universities. Of such lack of proper schooling for singers she has noted many tragic examples of late in Europe, where audiences have impulsively tended to forgive deficiencies in operatic singing if they are counterbal-

anced by vigorous and persuasive acting. But these singers cannot last without *bel canto*. The art of *bel canto* will survive, because the artists themselves cannot survive without it. It is necessary for the self-preservation of the singer, if nothing more.

IT is but a few years ago that the prima donna heard Lilli Lehmann and Jean de Reszke prove, by their performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, that the art of *bel canto* can and should be applied to Wagner, and she is convinced that the art can and must be applied to the most "modern"



operas, even when the composers of these seem to regard the voice as an orchestral instrument combinable with the others.

"WE must bear in mind," she once said to me on this point, "that the art of singing is not empirical. The laws that govern correct singing were discovered long ago, and form the only method of singing that exists. There is neither an Italian method nor a French method, nor even a modern method; there is just the right method. Because a singer is forced to adapt herself to the kind of opera of the time, and because the full resources of the voice, purely as such, are not exploited as they used to be, there is no need to imagine that the art of singing has died out."

AS regards her own career, it is well to remember that, although she is now esteemed as a Wagnerian singer, par excellence, she did not start out with the heavy Wagnerian rôles, but in the beginning of her operatic career sang only the so-called lyric parts of classic operas, particularly those of Weber and Mozart, and worked only very gradually into the lighter Wagnerian rôles of *Elizabeth* ("Tannhäuser"), *Eva* ("Meistersinger") and *Elsa* ("Lohengrin"). Not until 1903 did she begin to make her appearances in the heavier dramatic Wagnerian rôles, like the three *Brünnhildes*, and it was as late as 1908 when she included *Isolde* in her répertoire. In all this she followed the advice given her by her good friend, Lilli Lehmann, who said to her, "Johanna, if you feel that in singing the *Brünnhildes* and other dramatic rôles, your *bel canto* style, as required for the Mozart parts, will suffer, do not attempt the heavy rôles at all." This advice Mme. Gadski undoubtedly would have followed, had it been desirable for her to do so. But her schooling in *bel canto* was such that at the present time she is one of few prima donnas, possibly the only one, who can sing today a *Pamina*, in "Magic Flute" and tomorrow an *Isolde* or *Brünnhilde*. For Mme. Gadski takes the stand that all operas must be sung; neither recited nor shouted; and it is meeting the supreme test of the art of singing, when a prima donna, after interpreting a *Brünnhilde* or an *Isolde*, is fresh enough in voice to immediately follow it up with a Mozart cantilene.

WHEN Mme. Gadski studies great parts like *Isolde* and the three *Brünnhildes*, she tries first, after learning the music, to adapt her voice as much as possible to the directions of the composer, always starting from the point of view, however, that the music must be *sung* even in the greatest dramatic moments, never merely recited. Then, as to the impersonation of the characters, she thinks them over deeply, so as not to act and elaborate each pose and detail in a sophisticated manner, but naturally, leaving the actual acting entirely to the impulse of the moment, so as really to live the rôle she represents. In other words, Mme. Gadski, when singing the part of *Isolde*, endeavors to be the living *Isolde*, not just Mme. Gadski singing and acting an allotted part. For this reason she rarely does any acting during rehearsals, deeming it absurd to play the part of *Isolde* when the inspiration thereto is lacking.

IN writing newspaper criticisms of Mme. Gadski in "The Ring of the Nibelung," I have always stated that, among all prima donnas, she makes the most human *Brünnhilde*. And indeed, as regards the three *Brünnhildes*, she herself believes



JOHANNA GADSKI AS BRÜNNHILDE IN DIE WALKÜRE

that they should not be too highly colored dramatically, nor too god-like; especially as Wagner always is greatest when he is most human. For this reason it is her effort to instill as much of the human as possible into her *Brünnhildes*. She thinks it absolutely wrong to act the "Walküre" *Brünnhilde* in a highly dramatic manner. She is the playful, frolicsome and trusting child of Wotan, being extremely sad and over-awed by the punishment meted out to her, as her offense was committed merely through human pity.

THERE is likewise nothing heroic about *Brünnhilde*, in "Siegfried." She greets the world joyously after her long slumber, giving herself with maidenly coyness as wife to *Siegfried*, her long expected and beloved hero; all again very human! EVEN in the first act of "Goetterdaemmerung" *Brünnhilde* is nothing but the loving wife. It is only at the moment in the second act when she becomes convinced of the supposed faithlessness of *Siegfried*, that she also evolves into the highly dramatic; while in the last act, in the Immolation scene, she rises to the truly classical heights of ancient Greek tragedy.

AS a Lieder singer Mme. Gadski also endeavors in her interpretations to be as natural as possible, and to avoid all tricks and cheap effects. These, indeed, she despises. Of all songs she prefers the German Lied as represented by Schubert, Schumann, Franz, etc. She makes her technique subservient to the "feeling" of the song and, as in opera, she can only attain her best when she is entirely in sympathy with the Lied itself.

CRITICS recognize in Mme. Gadski the artist who has gradually but surely attained the height upon which she now stands. There is nothing sensational about her. All she tries to be is an artist, and in her every-day life a good wife and mother.



MARY GARDEN

NO great operatic career since Calvé's has been due so much to the artist's personality as Mary Garden's. Her personality, in fact, is more marked than Calvé's. The French prima donna, at the height of her career had a beautiful voice—rich, sensuous and full of color. Mary Garden's voice, no matter how well trained, would not of itself account for her unique position on the operatic stage. It is her haunting personality, the highly individual touch she gives to everything she does, which, with a voice that suffices, makes her one of the interesting figures in opera today.



She is a woman of subtle temperament who sings, and she is an entire exception to the traditional idea of the prima donna with whom voice is the first thing to be considered. That she herself realizes this is quite apparent from an interview in which she expressed the opinion that anyone who goes on the French stage today must have something else besides voice—a personality. She even went so far as to say that a mere voice bores Paris and, from her own success in America, she added that people seemed to feel the same way—that they did not care to hear a voice coming out of an expressionless face.

MARY GARDEN is indeed a prima donna of temperament controlled by artistic instinct; a temperament as varied as that of the rôles in which she appears. Thus her temperament may be that of twilight and mysticism as in *Mélisande*; anon of physical opulence and suggestion as in *Thais*; or of torrential passion, as in *Salome*. But whether mystic, opulent or purely of the flesh, there never is wanting that personal touch of the great artist who knows where art ends and vulgar realism begins and without seeming restraint or lack of abandon, keeps the artistic canons inviolate.

THIS remarkable woman—more singing actress than conventional prima donna—was born at Aberdeen, Scotland. But she was only six years old when her parents came to America and settled in Brooklyn, afterwards, however, going to Chicopee, Mass. Her father and mother were anxious for her to become a violinist, and accordingly she began studying the violin. But she instinctively took to singing and in time abandoned her violin instruction for vocal work. When she was only fourteen years old her parents moved to Chicago and there her ambition to study for the lyric stage was gratified. After

taking lessons in Chicago she went to Paris, where for two years she was a pupil of Trabadello and then studied under Chevalier and Fugère.

IT was through a meeting with Sybil Sanderson that she got an opportunity to sing at the Opéra Comique. This was in 1900. There she suddenly came face to face with the chance of her life and had courage to grasp it. She had studied the title part in Charpentier's "Louise," the operatic success of the season. One night the artist who was singing this rôle was taken ill. Miss Garden was the only singer in the house who knew the part. Carré, the manager, begged her to go on and finish the performance. She did; and so completely won her audience that Charpentier, the composer, insisted that she should have the part. For one hundred nights the young American was *Louise*. Having captured Paris, she went to London and later returned to America.



HER début in this country was made under Oscar Hammerstein's management, at the Manhattan Opera House, November 25, 1907, in Massenet's "Thais." New York opera-goers speedily became as enthusiastic as those of Paris. *Mélisande* in Debussy's "Pelléas and Mélisande" followed, and then *Salome* in the tragic Strauss opera of that name. Contrast with these rôles the lyric grace and charm of her *Fongleur*, and the wide range of her art becomes apparent. SHE created the title-rôle of "Natoma" by Victor Herbert; sang the rôle of *Prince*

Charming in Massenet's "Cendrillon"; has added "Carmen" to her répertoire and two summers ago sang for the first time in her career, the rôle of *Tosca* at the Opéra Comique in Paris; at the same time performing the unprecedented feat of appearing at the Opéra Comique and the Grand Opéra on alternate nights. THE importance to opera of the opportunity that came so suddenly for her to make her début in Paris is so great, owing to her unique position and influence on the operatic stage, that I should here give further details regarding it. When Sybil Sanderson befriended Miss Garden, her remittances from America had ceased and at the age of twenty-three years she had practically been turned adrift in Paris. She chanced to meet Miss Sanderson, whom she knew slightly, on the street, and told her of her predicament.

"YOU will come right to my house and live with me," said the prima donna, who was then at the height of her fame.

IT was through her that Carré, who at that time was manager of the Opéra



MARY GARDEN AS LE JONGLEUR DE NÔTRE DAME



Comique heard Miss Garden sing. She interested him, and he offered her an engagement to sing *Micaela* in "Carmen." Although this offer was made in mid-winter and she was not to appear until the following October, she derived from the engagement the privilege of attending performances and rehearsals at the Comique, a privilege she exercised most assiduously. It was in this way she heard rehearsals of "Louise," the music for which appealed to her so strongly that she bought a copy of the score, took it home with her and for her own pleasure and artistic interest studied the title rôle, working as hard for it as if she had been engaged to sing it at the production.

THE artist who had the rôle made a success of it, but she was not in good health and the strain of the performances told upon her. Mary Garden's enthusiasm for the rôle and the fact that she had studied it was known at the theatre. One afternoon there came a telephone call from Carré to Miss Sanderson asking her to have Miss Garden at the theatre that evening, ready to go on in the rôle if necessary. Miss Garden had never set foot on the operatic stage and her friend began arguing with the manager as to the folly of asking her to make her début under such circumstances. The young American girl promptly took the receiver out of her friend's hand and gave Carré an affirmative answer. That night she went to the theatre and watched the performance. She could see that the prima

donna who sang *Louise* was beginning to fail in the second act. In the intermission she was called for and told to get ready to go on. Messenger, the conductor, wanted to dismiss the opera. He argued that to allow an untried singer to go on with the rôle was risky to the reputation of composer, conductor and house. Carré, however, argued that there was an enormous audience, that he did not care to dismiss it, and that if Messenger declined to conduct for the young woman who was ready to go on and save the evening, he would find somebody who would. THE result is operatic history. Mary Garden's success was one of the greatest ever made at the Opéra Comique and it is said that when she left the company to come to America, she, an American, was receiving the highest salary ever paid there to an artist.

MISS GARDEN has not yet essayed a Wagnerian rôle but it is not at all unlikely that she will do so. But she will not, like others, begin with the more lyric rôles like *Elsa* and *Elizabeth* and gradually work her way up to the rôles of the music dramas. *Elsa* and *Elizabeth* do not interest her for they do not appeal to her temperament. *Brünnhilde* and *Isolde* are the rôles that attract her, and so strongly that she is studying German with





a possible view to learning them. However great the artists who have been heard in these rôles — and America is familiar with some of the greatest — Mary Garden's unique personality and temperament will give them new interest whether or not done as satisfactorily as by several of her great predecessors. For it is to Miss Garden's merit that she is not content with the externals of a character but makes a complete psychological study of each. It is this which accounts for the conspicuous differences in type which she is able to reproduce on the stage, so that while you always recognize Mary Garden, you also recognize *Mélisande*, *Salome*, *Louise* and the others — as only Mary Garden can do them. This delineation of character with as much care as if the work were not mere opera, but spoken drama, is the great novelty of Miss Garden's art as an opera singer. She believes that acting has been too much neglected on the operatic stage and it is a neglect which she had made it her mission to do away with.

FOR the subtleties of her art, an auditorium like the Metropolitan Opera House frankly is too large. It was the intimacy of the Manhattan Opera House which, fortunately, enabled Mary Garden to be appreciated here. She is a great artist; not a great prima donna in the old sense of the word; but a great artist in the new.

INDEED as a prima donna Miss Garden appears to look upon singing as a highly surcharged kind of speech, full of passionate intensity of utterance and emotional realism. That this is choice rather than limitation sometimes appears in the genuine lyric passages of song with which Miss Garden surprises her hearers. But, as a whole, the singing actress predominates in her and it is her fine sense of acting values that enables her to differentiate her characters so strikingly. Gifted with the full, yet slender form of a Phryne, enhancing these charms with plastic changes of pose and movement, every step and gesture becomes, in an interpretation like that of her *Thais*, part of a subtly contrived whole. Whether it be her wanton challenge in the first act of the opera;



the weary pall of triumph; the appeal to Venus; the nervous laugh at the moment of final revolt;—Miss Garden produces an effect of sensuousness which, being free from vulgarity, never is offensive. What a change from this priestess of Venus to the dressmaker *Louise*, enthralled with Paris and finally disappearing in its whirlpool! Her *Louise* loves life, its froth and fun. She is not virtuous, but neither is she vicious. Miss Garden has called her a cheery little skater on the edge of an abyss. Mr. Finck has well said that in the last scene of “*Louise*” Miss Garden rises to a splendid height of dramatic impression. “The call of Paris—her Paris, ‘splendeur de mes désirs,’ her ‘encore un jour d’amour’ and the whole delirious scene where her memories overpower her, till her mother cries, ‘She is going mad!’—all this is acted with entrancing art, and her impassioned singing intensifies the impression.”

DEBUSSY himself has paid a tribute to her art as *Mélisande*, in his music-drama, “*Pelléas et Mélisande*.” A volume of songs by him is dedicated “to Miss Mary Garden the unforgettable *Mélisande*.” A copy of the score of his opera, given by him to her, contains this autographed inscription: “In the future others may sing *Mélisande*, but you alone will remain the woman and the artist I hardly dared hope for.” In an article in which he refers to the rehearsal of “*Pelléas et Mélisande*” he says: “I have known cases of great devotion and great artists. Among the latter there was an artist curiously personal. I had hardly anything to suggest to her; by herself she gradually painted the character of *Mélisande*; I watched her with a singular confidence mingled with curiosity.”

“CURIOUSLY personal!” It is interesting to note that Debussy too refers to her personality—that mystic, vague, haunting temperamental influence, which, after all, is the key to her success.





ALFRED HERTZ



ARTURO TOSCANINI



FELIX WEINGARTNER



CLEOFONTE CAMPANINI



GIULIO GATTI-CASAZZA



HENRY RUSSELL



ELEANORA DE CISNEROS



ELEANORA DE CISNEROS



FRIEDA HEMPEL IN DER FREISCHÜTZ



FRIEDA HEMPEL AS GILDA



ALESSANDRO BONCI



OTTO GORITZ AS BECKMESSER



CHARLES DALMORES



OTTO GORITZ IN THE BARTERED BRIDE



EMMY DESTINN



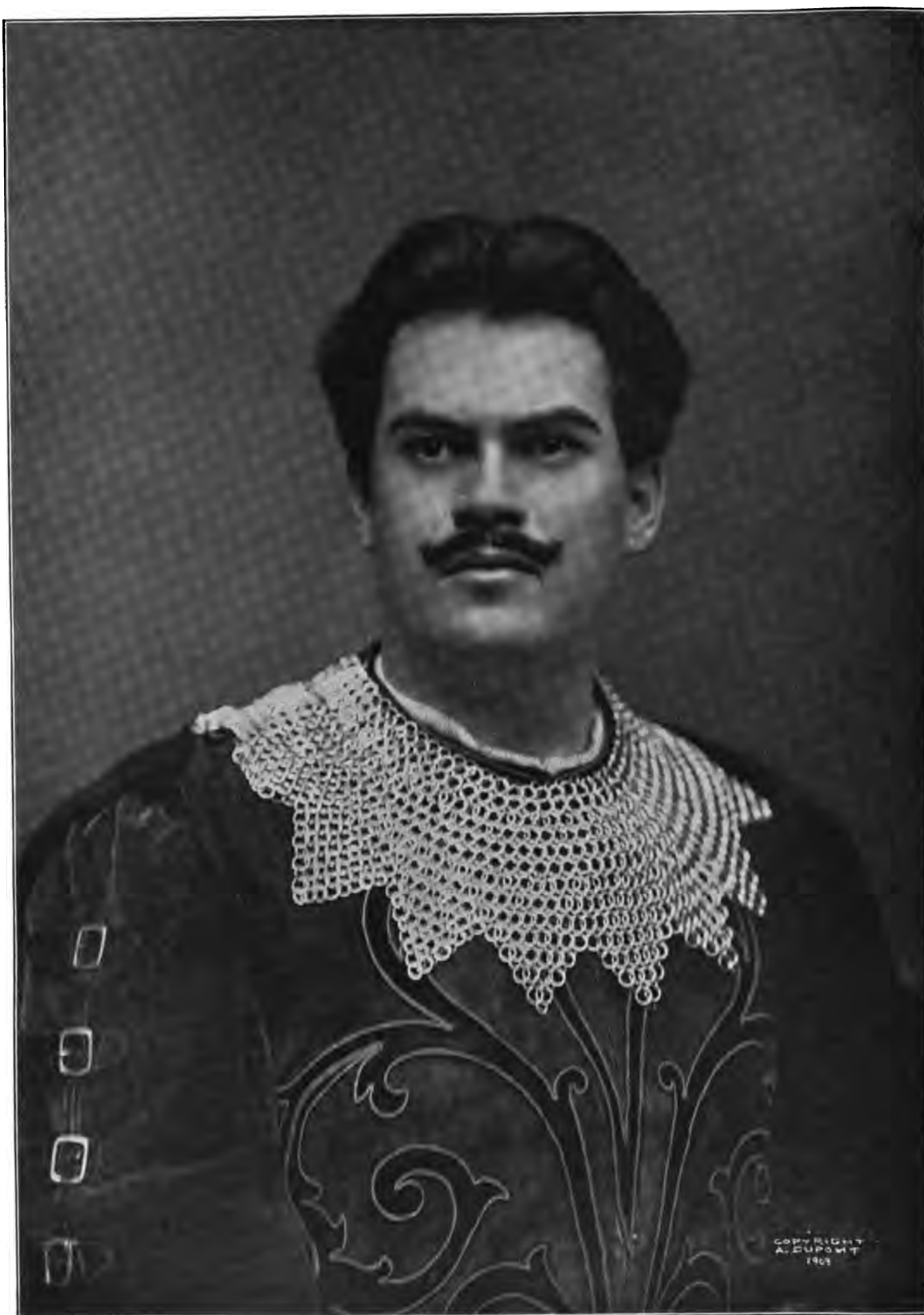
EMMY DESTINN AS AIDA



EMMY DESTINN IN MADAMA BUTTERFLY



EMMY DESTINN AS LA GIOCONDA



RICCARDO MARTIN AS MANRICO IN IL TROVATORE



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EMMY DESTINN



LOUISE HOMER AS FRICKA



LOUISE HOMER AS AMNERIS



LOUISE HOMER IN GIOCONDA



LOUISE HOMER AS ORTRUD



ADAMO DIDUR AS BORIS GODOUNOFF



LOUISE EDVINA



ADAMO DIDUR IN TALES OF HOFFMANN



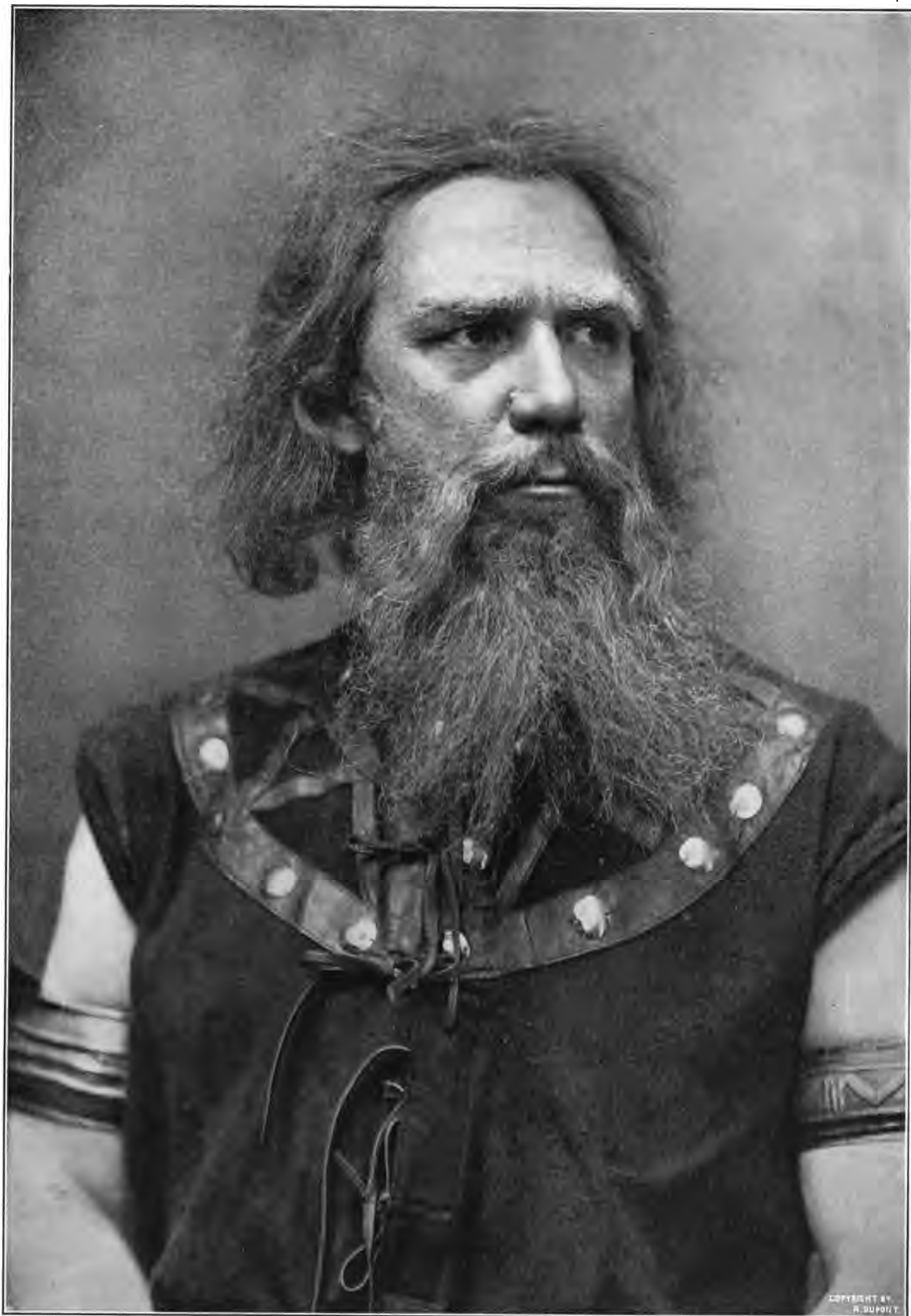
CAROLINA WHITE



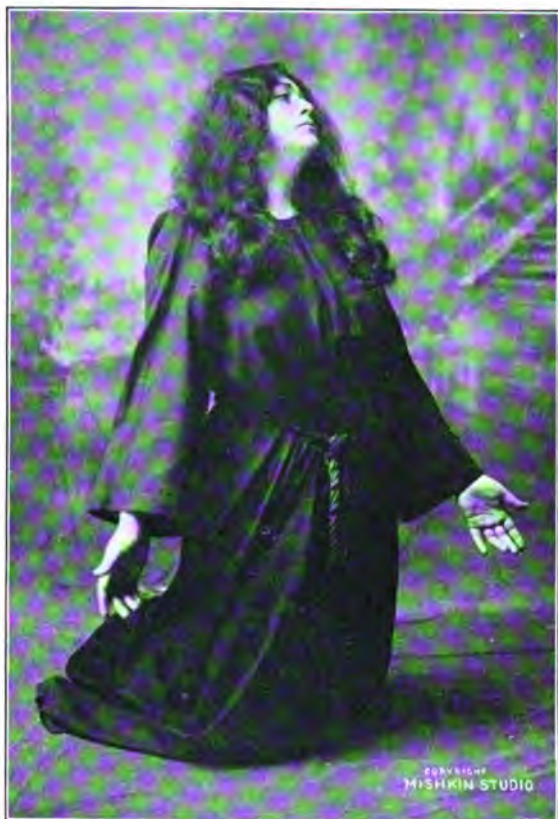
EMMA EAMES



ENRICO CARUSO AS THE DUKE IN RIGOLETTO



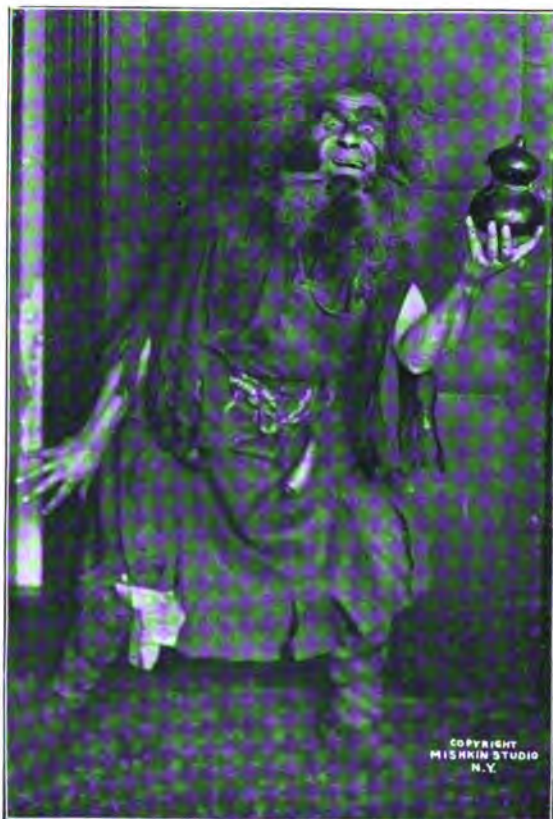
DAVID BISPHAM AS KURWENAL



MARGARETHE MATZENAUER AS ORTRUD



HECTOR DUFRANNE IN SAMSON ET DALILA



ALBERT REISS AS MIME



LUISA TETRAZZINI



ANTON VAN ROOY



CARL BRAUN AS WOTAN



ANDREA DE SEGUROLA IN THE TALES
OF HOFFMANN



ANTONIO SCOTTI



MARIO SAMMARCO



ANNA CASE



CHARLES DALMORES



ALMA GLUCK



EMMA CALVÉ AS CARMEN



SIG. SCOTTI IN DON GIOVANNI



PASQUALE AMATO AS CYRANO



FRANCES ALDA AS ROXANE IN CYRANO



LUISA TETRAZZINI AS FILINA



ANTONIO SCOTTI AS IAGO



LILLI LEHMANN AS ISOLDE



JOHANNA GADSKI AS ISOLDE



EMILY SALTZMANN-STEVENS AS ISOLDE



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MIGNON



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MIGNON



JEAN GERVILLE-RÉACHE AS DALILA



VANNI MARCOUX AS THE FATHER IN LOUISE



OLIVE FREMSTAD AS SIEGLINDE



OLIVE FREMSTAD AS VENUS



MARIE RAPPOLD IN MEFISTOFELE



LUCREZIA BORI AS MAÑON



LINA CAVALIERI AS THAIS



MARGARETHE MATZENAUER AS BRÜNNHILDE



LUCILLE MARCEL AS TOSCA



BERTA MORENA AS SENTA



CARMEN MÉLIS AS MINNIE



FLORENCIO CONSTANTINO



ALICE NIELSEN



CARMEN MÉLIS AS TOSCA



BELLA ALTEN AS MUSETTA



BELLA ALTEN IN LE DONNE CURIOSSE



MAGGIE TEYTE



EMMA TRENTINI



NELLIE MELBA AS MARGUERITE



LILLIAN NORDICA AS ISOLDE



M. PLANÇON AS MEPHISTOPHELES



LUCREZIA BORI AS JULIETTE



LUCREZIA BORI



MARIA GAY



GIOVANNI ZENATELLO



JOURNET AS ESCAMILLO



FRANCES ALDA



JOHN MCCORMACK



CLARENCE WHITEHILL



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JOHANNA GADSKI AS BRÜNNHILDE



EDOUARD DE RESZKE AS HAGEN



GERALDINE FARRAR AS JULIET



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MIGNON



M. PLANÇON



ENRICO CARUSO AS DON JOSÉ



ENRICO CARUSO IN GIOCONDA



GERALDINE FARRAR



GERALDINE FARRAR AS JULIET



JEAN DE RESZKE AS TRISTAN



ANDREA DE SEGUIROLA IN LA BOHÈME



MARIO SAMMARCO AS FIGARO



RICCARDO MARTIN AS PINKERTON



EDMOND CLÉMENT AS HOFFMANN



LILLIAN NORDICA



PUTNAM GRISWOLD AS WOTAN



JOHANNA GADSKI AS BRÜNNHILDE IN DIE WALKÜRE



MARY GARDEN AS THAIS



PASQUALE AMATO IN LA GIOCONDA



HERBERT WITHERSPOON IN LOHENGRIN



JACQUES URLUS



JACQUES URLUS AS SIEGMUND



FRANCIS MACLENNAN AS PARSIFAL

MME. CALVÉ

FASCINATING Calvé! Mention of her name at once recalls the dark-haired, dark-eyed Spanish gypsy, *Carmen*, with the huge crimson flower thrust in her raven hair. She was the *Carmen* par excellence. Americans always will measure other *Carmens* by her, just as those who saw Edwin Booth as *Hamlet* measure all other *Hamlets* by him.

AND yet the perversity of Man! When she was rehearsing for her first appearance as *Carmen* at the Opéra Comique, in Paris, and introducing those little bits of stage business and those dramatic vocal changes that were to astonish a world, which believed itself thoroughly familiar with the opera, she was constantly interrupted and corrected by the stage manager. He had seen many *Carmens*, he had his idea of how the rôle should be done—the purely conventional acceptance of the character—and he wanted her to act it and sing it according to his idea.

Mme. Calvé simply continued rehearsing according to her own idea. Result, the director was appealed to by the stage manager and called in to witness a rehearsal. "Oh, let her alone," he said. "She knows nothing about the rôle and will find it out to her grief at the first performance. It will be a good lesson for her." But at the first performance there burst upon an astonished world a new *Carmen*—the *Carmen* she has been ever since.

I ONCE heard someone arguing with Mme. Calvé that she made a mistake in wearing the gorgeous red silk petticoat in the first act—that a gypsy cigarette girl could not afford to dress so richly. The prima donna gave one of her fascinating shoulder shrugs. "When I decided to sing *Carmen*," she replied, "I went to Seville, the very place where the scene of the opera is laid, to make studies on the spot. I often stood outside the cigarette factories and watched the girls coming to and going from their work. On one occasion I followed one of them to a second-hand costumer's, and saw her buy a brilliant red skirt. The next day she wore it, and occasionally lifted her dress a little so as to give a glimpse of the skirt and flirt with it. I went directly to the same costumer and bought the exact duplicate of the skirt. I have it on now, and as soon as you see me go on the stage you will see that I flirt with it just as I saw the cigarette girl in Seville do." It is just as well not to call the work of an artist





EMMA CALVÉ



like Mme. Calvé in question. Were I to suggest that *Marguerite's* dropping of her prayer-book in surprise and confusion on her first meeting with *Faust* was somewhat theatrical, although subtly symbolical of *Faust's* influence on her life, I should be afraid of being told by Mme. Calvé that she had seen Gretchen do the very same thing.

ACCORDING to the best authorities, Mme. Calvé, whose baptismal name is Emma Roquer, was born at Decazeville, near Aveyron, in 1866. Her father, a Spaniard, was a civil engineer. She attended school in a convent, and it is said that her singing of the "Ave Marias" and other solos in the convent musical services attracted the attention of a Parisian, who after her father's death urged her mother to send her to Paris for a musical education.

AFTER her début in Brussels, in 1881, followed by numerous European successes, she came to the Metropolitan Opera House in 1893, making a sensational success as *Carmen*. The opera was

given thirteen times that season, and each time at receipts close to the \$10,000 mark. *Carmen* continued to be her great rôle during the subsequent seasons that she appeared here, and indeed, to have watched her in her prime, her lithe form swaying in the "Habanera," or the "Seguidilla," while her dark eyes and her gestures expressed every shade of meaning in the words she sang, and her plastic voice allowed no opportunity for artistic musical effect to pass by, remains an experience to be treasured.



EMMA EAMES

BEAUTY is one of the greatest aids to stage success. But when all possible pæans in its praise have been sung, it remains, after all, only an aid.

THEREFORE no artist, even if she be a woman, cares to have her physical attributes dwelt upon at too great length, since it makes her artistic gifts seem of secondary importance. But in the case of Mme. Eames, her pulchritude is so obvious and adds so much to the charm of her performances that it cannot be dismissed with the mere statement that she is beautiful. When she appeared in New York for the first time as *Aida*, she dressed the rôle in an entirely new and picturesque style. The soft draperies of her costume were in dull oriental tones, blending so exquisitely and so harmonizingly with her personality that had she gone through the entire opera without singing a note she still would have been an entrancing *Aida*. There was not a critic who did not speak of her perfect physical fulfilment of the rôle, and of her costume. In selecting this, she doubtless was somewhat guided by the taste of her first husband, Julian Story, a son of Nathaniel Hawthorne's friend, W. W. Story, the sculptor, whom the great romancer visited in Rome, and who, it is believed, was not without influence in inspiring "The Marble Faun."

BORN in Shanghai, China, where her father practised law in the international courts, she passed her childhood in Bath, Me., with her grandparents. Her mother, an excellent musician, and gifted with a fine voice, taught music in Portland. To her judicious influence Mme. Eames owes much. The mother was too good a musician not to realize that her daughter possessed an unusual voice, but she did not allow her to begin cultivating it until she was fifteen years old, for she knew that too early training is apt to strain the voice. Twice a week Emma went from Bath to Portland and received instruction from her mother. Then, when the latter realized that the daughter's talent was capable of greater development, she arranged for her to stay in Boston with Miss Munger, an excellent teacher. Emma's mother did not wish to take upon herself the responsibility of cultivating her daughter's voice. She did not trust herself sufficiently, for she appreciated the difficulty of teaching in one's own family. Still she had done very well by the girl, for she had most judiciously avoided the risk of ruining her voice by too early application. In Bath they knew, of course, that Emma sang, and they persuaded her to sing in church



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EMMA EAMES AS ELSA

and at private musicales; but as soon as the mother heard of it she put a stop to it.

THE future prima donna studied three years with Miss Munger. After a while she began to sing professionally, making such excellent progress that she was engaged for the first soprano in Schumann's "Manfred," with the Boston Symphony orchestra, under Gericke, and also sang with George Osgood, B. J.

Lang, and Professor Paine, of Harvard. The latter gave a series of lectures in Boston on old church music. The young singer took the soprano part in the musical illustrations to these, learning to read the old-fashioned square notes. It was a splendid experience for her. Professor Paine is a charming man, and he encouraged her in every way, explaining the history and different forms of music to her, and giving personal attention to her study of the illustrations to his lectures. To this experience she owes a foundation in the classics for which she always has been grateful. Though she now sings Italian, French and Wagner roles, she still remains true to her early loves, the classics, as witness her purity of style in the Mozart operas. Her *Pamina* in the great revival of Mozart's "Magic Flute," at the Metropolitan Opera House, then under Grau, was a perfect example of the serene and chaste style of singing demanded by classic rôles. "To this day," she once said to me, "I am deeply moved by Beethoven's symphonies, and Mozart I seem to sing by intuition."

IN Paris, Emma Eames studied voice with Marchesi and deportment with Plugue. But when she

sought an engagement at the Opéra, she was refused, although Gounod himself had coached her for *Juliette*. Later, however, an offer came to her from this house, and she appeared there in March, 1889, in the rôle in which Gounod had coached her, her success being so great that the next day she received a cablegram from Augustus Harris, offering her a London engagement. The Opéra promptly doubled her salary—which seems to have been doing pretty well for the second day of her career. At the Opéra she appeared with the two de Reszkes and Plançon, three artists with whom she sang for so many seasons at the Metropolitan.

HER operatic début in America—*Elsa*, in Chicago—was made in 1891, the same year in which she had first appeared in England. Her first rôle at the Metropolitan was *Juliette*. She appeared in many operas in the course of her engagements at that house, but at present she limits her appearances almost entirely to the concert stage.



MME. MELBA

“WHERE is Miss Nellie?” THAT was the question often asked in the Mitchell household in Melbourne, Australia. Mme. Melba’s maiden name was Nellie Mitchell, and she was born in the Australian capital in 1865. She was a vivacious, romping child, usually in some mischief or other, and thus the question, “Where is Miss Nellie?” was a frequent one.

THE house in which she was born is called “Doonside.” It is an old rambling building with a large garden, and still is her family’s town residence in Melbourne. But the place around which most of her childhood memories cluster is Steel’s Flat, Lilydale, one of her father’s country places in Victoria, and now the property of David Syme, a wealthy newspaper proprietor. There she was free to roam outdoors. It was her delight to gal-

lop bareback across the plains and through the winding bridle tracks of the bush.

NOTWITHSTANDING her active disposition, she loved to be alone, and she herself tells that she often spent hours at a time fishing on the edge of the creek and perfectly happy, even if she caught little or nothing. “The silent plains,” she says, “the vast ranges of eucalyptus forest, the sunny skies, and the native wild birds were all one glorious harmony, and the time seemed all too short as I rode, or fished, singing, singing all the time. I was never at the homestead, nor indeed anywhere else, when I should have been, and the question, ‘Where is Miss Nellie?’ grew to be a first-class conundrum.”

BOTH her parents were intensely musical. Her mother was of Spanish descent and from her Mme. Melba inherits her handsome looks.



SHE was ambitious to go on the stage, but her parents opposed her wishes, and she was unable to carry them out until her marriage to Mr. Charles Armstrong (from whom she has been divorced). When, in 1887, her father was appointed by the government of Victoria a commissioner to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London, she accompanied him to London. This trip proved the turning-point in her career. In Freemasons Hall she sang to an audience of actors and their friends Gounod's "Ave Marie" and an English ballad. She was utterly unknown to almost everyone in the audience—"an unknown Australian lady" she was called at the time—but her singing created such a furor that someone gave her a letter to Mme. Marchesi, and, armed with this, she went to Paris and presented herself at the Rue Jouffroy. Mme. Marchesi heard her, and after she had sung her second song the famous teacher rushed excitedly out of the drawing-room and called to her husband, "*Salvatore, j'ai enfin une étoile!*" When the candidate for prima-donna honors had finished, Mme. Marchesi gravely asked, "Mrs. Armstrong, are you serious? Have you patience?"



"Yes."

"THEN if you will stay with me for one year I will make of you something *ex-tra-or-din-ary*." (Mme. Melba says that Mme. Marchesi divided this word in a curious staccato way.)

MME. MELBA always speaks of her teacher with love and heartfelt gratitude. Their relations became almost from the start those of warm friends. Mme. Melba has a portrait of Mme. Marchesi across which the famous teacher has written: "*Que Dieu protège ma chère élève Nellie Melba et qu'en chantant et enchantant le monde, elle souvienne quelques fois de son affectionnée Mathilde Marchesi.*"

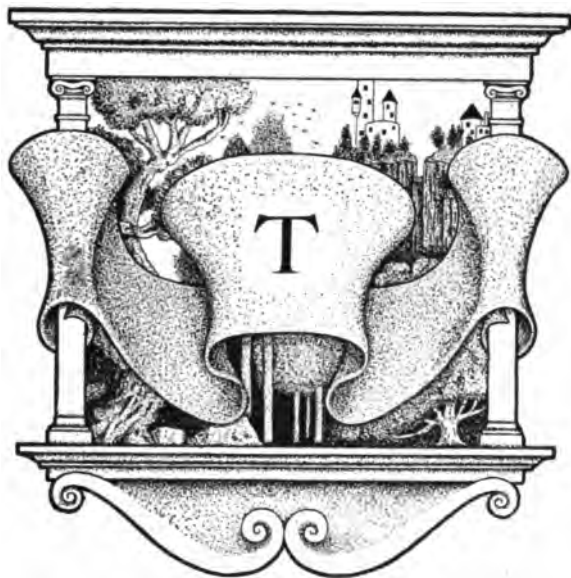
THE Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, has been the scene of many brilliant débuts. It is regarded as the stepping-stone to the Grand Opéra, Paris, on the one hand, and Covent Garden on the other. It was there that Mme. Melba, who takes her stage name from her native city, Melbourne, made her début in October, 1887, as *Gilda* in "*Rigoletto*." It was brilliantly successful and led to successive engagements at Covent Garden, Paris, St. Petersburg, Nice, Milan, Stockholm and Copenhagen, and in December, 1893, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Afterwards, Mme. Melba largely divided her time between this country and London. But she has also sung with brilliant success in the principal German cities and in Vienna.

HER voice is a high soprano of beautiful quality, and she is at her best in rôles like *Juliette*, *Lucia*, *Ophelie*, *Marguerite*, and *Marguerite de Valois* in "*Les Huguenots*." She also has sung with much success *Mimi*, in Puccini's "*La Bohème*."



LILLIAN NORDICA AS BRÜNNHILDE

MME. NORDICA



HE career of Mme. Nordica is a splendid illustration of what can be accomplished through the union of extraordinary natural gifts with indomitable energy. It is now some time past since this artist won her position among the great prima donnas. Yet not for a moment has she relaxed the energy which has been one of the characteristics of her career or become less persevering in her studies.

SHE is internationally famous, and one of the greatest triumphs of her artistic life was when she opened the Prinz Regenten Theatre in Munich. She, an American of Americans, was the first

Isolde and *Elsa* to be heard in that German house. The impression she created with her *Isolde* was so profound already in the first act, that, during the intermission the manager came behind the scenes and engaged her for the *Brünnhilde* rôles the next year. She once told me she studied *Sieglinde* in "Die Walküre" with "Mme. Cosima," Wagner's widow. "I never may sing the rôle," she said to me. "But I always am singing or studying."

A *BRÜNNHILDE* or an *Isolde* hardly is associated with a little village in Maine. Yet Maine is the native State of Mme. Nordica, as it is of two other great American prima donnas—Mme. Eames and Annie Louise Carey. Mme. Nordica was born in Farmington, in the interior of the State, in 1859. The details of her musical career are so well known that they need not be repeated here. Her *Isolde* début was its event of greatest interest. It occurred after she had sung *Elsa* at Bayreuth and had induced the de Reszkes to do the opera in German at the Metropolitan. From Anton Seidl then came the suggestion that they do the far greater "Tristan und Isolde." Mme. Nordica went to Bayreuth to study *Isolde* with Mme.



Cosima. An outsider cannot imagine the strain imposed on an operatic artist by taking up at a certain point in her career a new rôle in a new language. The question of physical endurance is an important one. From ten in the morning until one in the afternoon, and again from three until five, the prima donna studied with Mme. Wagner in a little room, where she was drilled just as if it were a stage. The pronunciation of a single word would be gone over as often as 3,000 times. When the studies for the day were finished, Mme. Nordica was so exhausted she would go straight to bed.

THE two De Reszkes, who were to sing *Tristan* and *King Mark*, were drilled by a Bayreuth répétiteur; and when the three singers met in New York with Anton Seidl, who had secured a room at a hotel where they would not be disturbed, and they started in with the great scenes between *Tristan* and *Isolde*, they fitted right in like hand in glove. "I never shall forget how deeply Anton Seidl was moved," said Mme. Nordica to me in describing her experience. "We all felt that we were starting out on this new race side by side, with every nerve and every thought on the alert. But it was a great strain. Seidl came to me early one morning to go over my rôle with me, and he left me about two o'clock in the afternoon, having gone over the acting to the minutest detail. I had to rest for two days. Every noise, every sound, brought up something from 'Tristan und Isolde.'"

FINALLY, the night for the performance arrived. Seidl came up to Mme Nordica and the De Reszkes and said, reassuringly: "Keep calm. Nothing can happen to you. You know what you have to do, and I am down there in the orchestra." But having related this, Mme. Nordica added, "Nevertheless, no one can know, and I never can tell, what it felt like to lie on that couch and hear the prelude progressing bar after bar and the sign given for the curtain to go up. They were awful moments."

WITH her *Isolde* triumph, which occurred in November, 1895, Mme. Nordica's career reached its high-water mark, and there she has maintained herself ever since. She is the perfect embodiment of the character. She also is a great *Brünnhilde*, and, not to mention her *Donna Elvira* in "Don Giovanni," her *Valentine* or her *Aida*, but to go to the opposite extreme of the operatic pole, an impassioned *Leonora* in "Trovatore." Practically the whole range of the repertoire is hers.

THE lesson of her career is that from the very start she steadily has progressed toward the highest ideal. She was not content to remain a mere prima donna—to continue a *Violetta*, a *Marguerite*, or even an *Elsa*. It was on and ever on. From "Traviata" five times a week in a little Italian opera house, one of her early experiences on the stage, to *Isolde* at the Metropolitan Opera House, is a far cry; but Mme. Nordica has covered all the ground between. There has been no relaxing energy, no resting upon well-earned laurels. Her career has been an honor to herself, to the operatic stage and to the country which is proud to call her its own.

JEAN AND EDOUARD DE RESZKE

NO two figures are more notable in the operatic world than those of Jean and Edouard De Reszke. They stand for the highest achievements in their respective *milieus*—the one the greatest tenor of the day, the other the greatest basso. Jean does not, indeed, possess a phenomenal tenor voice. His higher notes do not ring out with the resonant tenor timbre which those who remember Campanini in his prime can recall so well. But it is a voice of great beauty and exquisitely managed, and to the interpretation of every rôle he brings an artistic seriousness, a completeness of dramatic conception, which give it the significance of a “creation.” Moreover, “Monsieur Jean” is associated with Wagnerian performances of unequalled beauty, and thus deserves a place not only in the annals of opera, but in the history of music; and the same may be said of “Monsieur Edouard.”

THE De Reszkes were born in Warsaw, Poland; Jean in January, 1852; Edouard in December, 1855. Their father owned a hotel there. Both parents were passionately fond of music, and the mother possessed a fine soprano voice, which had been trained by Garcia and Viardot. It is worth noting that a sister of the De Reszkes, Josephine, who died in 1892, was a distinguished prima donna, and that another brother, Victor, is said to possess a fine tenor voice, but remains in Poland to manage the large estates of the two brothers and the family. A family of voices, forsooth!

AS a boy Jean sang in the cathedral choir in Warsaw. But he was destined for the bar, and after his school days began his law studies. In these he is said to have shown the same conscientiousness which has characterized his artistic career. But the inspiration which comes from the love of the work in hand was lacking. He was ambitious to become an opera singer, and from a family so musical as his there was no opposition. ACCORDINGLY, he went to Italy and successively became a pupil of Ciaffell and Cotogni. These two teachers trained him as a barytone, and it was as such and under the Italianized name of Reschi that he made his début as *Alfonso* in Donizetti's “Favorita” in Venice, in January, 1874. For several years he continued singing barytone rôles, and in such was heard in Paris and London. He acquired a large barytone repertory, including *Don Giovanni* and *Valentine* in “Faust.” He was the barytone at the Italien, in Paris, when that theatre was under Maurel's management. A friend of mine who





heard him sing *Valentine* there tells me that he was not very fine in the rôle, and had complained after the performance of the great fatigue he suffered after each appearance in opera. It was this fatigue which first led him to the conclusion that his voice really was not a barytone, but a tenor. Moreover, he had been able in singing *Alfonso* to always create a furore with a high A natural in the caldaletta in the first aria.

AT all events, a famous teacher, Sbriglia, urged him to abandon singing barytone, assuring him that with proper training he could become a tenor. Accordingly, he went to work under Sbriglia, and in 1879 made his début as a tenor in Madrid, as *Robert*, in Meyerbeer's "*Robert le Diable*." He made a great success. He sang at the Paris Opéra, creating, among other rôles, *Rodrigue*, in Massenet's "*Le Cid*." From Paris he came to this country in 1889, to the Metropolitan Opera House, and he was seen here almost every season under Grau, taking part

also in the Covent Garden seasons. In 1899 he retired for a year, and on his reappearance at Covent Garden as *Faust* in Gounod's opera he broke down and it was feared that his voice was permanently impaired. But in December of the same year (1900) he returned to New York with his voice completely restored. His finest Wagnerian rôles were *Lohengrin*, *Siegfried*, in the music drama of that name, and in "*Götterdämmerung*," and *Tristan*; he also was a notable *Faust*, *Romeo*, *Rhadames* and *Raoul*.

EDOUARD DE RESZKE studied agriculture at an agricultural college, but he too broke away from the work which his parents had chosen for him, and studied in Italy under Colletti and Steller. In 1875 he went to Paris with his mother and his sister Josephine, the prima donna. He sang a good deal as an amateur at musicales, and when Verdi produced "*Aïda*" in Paris and was hunting about for some one for the part of *The King*, Escudier, the conductor, who had heard Edouard sing in private, said to the composer: "Perhaps that big fellow, Edouard De Reszke, will take the rôle." When Edouard received the proposition he consulted with his sister. "Go and see Verdi," she said. "If you please him in a little rôle, it may lead to something better." ACCORDINGLY, Edouard went to the Hôtel de Bade and called on Verdi. After looking him over, the composer asked, "Do you know '*Aïda*'?" Edouard answered, "I have heard it in Italy, and have sung all the rôles for my own amusement."

"The female ones, too?" asked Verdi.

THEN they laughed, and the next day Edouard had his first rehearsal.



JEAN DE RESZKE

MME. SCHUMANN-HEINK

FEW prima donnas have had a harder struggle for success than Mme. Schumann-Heink. Her maiden name was Ernestine Roessler, and she was the daughter of an Austrian army officer, who at the time of her birth was stationed in Lieben, near Prague. Her father had wretchedly small pay, and the family was very poor. Besides herself there were three sisters and a brother.

WHEN she was ten years old she was sent to the Ursuline Convent in Prague. There it was discovered by a nun that she had a voice, and while no attempt was made to educate her musically, she was placed in the choir, where she sang entirely by ear. When she sang well, she received as a reward a *kipfel* (a cookie with raisins). If she made a slip she had her ears boxed. Thus her musical education consisted of *kipfel* and slaps.

SHE was at the convent two years and a half. Then her father was transferred to Graz. There a singing teacher named Marietta von Leclair recognized the young girl's talent, and through sheer desire not to let it go to waste, undertook to give Ernestine lessons without compensation. For two years she taught her nothing but exercises, then began giving her songs by Mendelssohn, Schubert, and others. The girl had at that time a deep contralto with no high notes. On one occasion someone who was calling on the singing teacher heard the pupil in an adjoining room singing Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen." "I did not know," said the visitor, "that you had calves among your pupils." "Ah," was Fräulein von Leclair's reply, "she is not a calf. She will be a great singer some day."

WHEN Ernestine was sixteen years old Maria Wilt, a famous prima donna of the Vienna Opera, came to Graz for a performance of the Ninth Symphony. The young girl was in the quartette, and the prima donna, noticing her voice, recommended her so highly to the director of the Vienna Opera that he sent for her to come and have her voice tried. Here was an opportunity but also a dilemma. The family was so wretchedly poor that the father could not give her the necessary sixty florins to enable her to make the trip. In her quandary she applied to the famous Field-Marshal Benedek, who promptly gave her the required amount.

ACCORDINGLY she went to Vienna and sang for Director von Jauner. Of her experience she says: "I was a thin, scrawny-looking girl, and shockingly dressed. My clothes were of the poorest material, and badly fitting. Altogether I suppose I presented a most impoverished appearance. The director heard me sing. Then, after looking me over, he said: 'You had better go home, and get fed up.' While regularly engaged at Hamburg, she made a tremendous hit as *Azucena* at Kroll's, in Berlin. Of course, her Hamburg director heard of it, and some





ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK



time after her fourth child had been born he came to her lodgings and asked her if she would sing *Fides* the following night. She knew she would have no chance to rehearse, but for years she had been begging him in vain to let her appear in some important rôle, and this was her opportunity. So she went on without a rehearsal and scored a tremendous success.

AT the time, one of the most noted prima donnas in Germany was a member of the Hamburg company. She was so piqued at Mme. Heink's success that at noon one day she sent word that she would be unable to sing *Carmen* that night. The manager despatched a messenger to Mme. Heink and asked if she would take the rôle. Mme. Heink not only had never sung the rôle, she never had even studied it, but she had often heard the opera, and with her facility for picking up music by ear, she had acquired the rôle vocally and by watching other prima donnas had learned the "business." Therefore she consented to help the management out, went on in the evening and scored a veritable triumph. The next week she sang *Ortrud* in "*Lohengrin*." The following month she learned and sang three new rôles—*Favorita*, *Adriano* in "*Rienzi*," and

Amneris in "*Aïda*," besides singing twenty-two times in her regular repertoire. She now received a considerable increase in her salary and filled many engagements for concerts and for star performances at other opera houses. At this time, too, she separated from her husband, afterward marrying the actor, Carl Schumann, and taking her present stage name. A success at Bayreuth in 1896 led to her engagement in London and this country, where she made her début in 1898. Mme. Schumann-Heink has a superb voice of both mezzo and contralto compass. Her *Ortrud*, *Bragäne*, *Waltraute*, and *Erda* are her most notable achievements. She is also a very popular concert-singer and a splendid mother to her eight children, to whom she is absolutely devoted.



MME. SEMBRICH

MME. SEMBRICH'S maiden name was Marcelline Cohainska. But when she went on the stage she adopted her mother's family name, Sembrich, and shortened her given name to Marcella. She was born at Lemberg, in Austrian Poland. Her father was a self-educated musician. Without having received any instruction, there nevertheless hardly was an instrument which he could not play, although the piano and the violin were his special instruments. There were nine sons and four daughters in the family. The father taught his children music, and the future prima donna hardly had begun to speak when she knew her notes. At four years old she began the study of the pianoforte and at six years old the violin, practising on an instrument which her father made for her.

HE had taught his wife to play the violin after their marriage, and Mme. Sembrich says she remembers very well playing when she was seven years old in a string quartette composed of herself, her mother, her brother, and her father. Thus she lived in a musical atmosphere. She breathed in music, not teacher's music, but music which was part of the family life and was second-nature. The family travelled through the provinces as wandering musicians, Marcelline playing the piano and violin at concerts, the father giving music lessons, one year in one town, the next year in another. She was not yet singing; in fact, none of the family was aware that she had a voice.

AN old gentleman who heard her play in one of these wandering minstrel tours was so much interested in her performance that he placed her in the conservatory in Lemberg. There for eleven years she studied the piano with Professor Stengl, whom she subsequently married. She also studied the violin. When she was about fifteen or sixteen years old she began singing for herself and in choruses. The opinion of those who heard her was that she had a pretty voice, but rather a small one, though of considerable range. For this reason she continued her piano and violin lessons, but did nothing for her voice.

STENGL, however, was sure she had a voice worth developing. He took her to Lamperti in Milan, and there she studied voice-placement for two years. Lamperti used to say to her: "no water, no sailing; no breathing, no singing. The voice sails on the breath."

IN 1880 Stengl decided to take her to London, where Gye was giving a season. She had no engagement, but when she asked, "What shall we do when we get there?" her husband replied, "No





MARCELLA SEMBRICH

matter about that. Come along." She was utterly unknown in London except to Vianesi, who was conducting at Covent Garden. He induced Gye to let her sing for him. She reached Covent Garden just after Patti had finished rehearsing "Dinorah," and before the orchestra had left. She sang an aria from "Lucia," and although the orchestra was tired from rehearsing, it rose in a body and applauded her. Gye at once engaged her to make her début in "Lucia" in a company which included Patti, Albani, Gayarre and Graziani. THE following winter found her in St. Petersburg, where she made an equally great success, and in 1882 she sang in Madrid. In 1883, with only three years as an opera-singer behind her, she took part as one of the principal prima donnas in the opening season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. She made her début in "Lucia," singing also in "Il Barbiere," "Puritani," "Hamlet," "Martha," "Figaro," "Traviata" and "Sonnambula." After this season she went to Paris, Lisbon, and again to St. Petersburg, and from that time until her return here to sing with the Maurice Grau Opera Company, she sang chiefly in St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, with a few London seasons, and always with growing success. She came back here during the season of 1898-99 and soon re-established herself in popular favor. At the spectacular revival of Mozart's "Magic Flute," she was the *Queen of the Night*, a most brilliant performance.

MME. SEMBRICH is one of the few great exponents at the present day of the pure Italian style of singing, and of the Italian repertoire, including Mozart. In Wagner she has essayed only *Elsa* and *Eva* in "Die Meistersinger." She believes that her voice has lasted so well because she stays in her *genre*. While she considers Wagner marks a colossal progress in music as such, she does not consider that musical declamation with a heavy orchestral accompaniment is good for certain voices, hers among them, and she believes it impossible for a young singer to begin with Wagner without ruining her voice. On this point she says: "To sing 'Lucia' one must study for years. Yet many young singers think that it just requires voice and some knowledge of music to sing Wagner. Times have changed. Now life and excitement in everything is wanted. It is so even in pictures and books. But this is only a passing characteristic of the times, for after all it is the true and beautiful that survive."



MILLE. TERNINA

MILKA TERNINA was born in Croatia. Her given name, Milka, is Croatian for darling. Therefore the interpreter of the stately *Brünnhilde*, the impassioned *Isolde*, the tragic *Tosca*, is "Darling" Ternina. If it seems an absurd name for a great prima donna, it must be remembered that her parents, having no idea that a great career lay before their girl baby, did not consult the public in naming her. Moreover, there is some evidence that the name is not ill chosen, although its owner is a *Brünnhilde*, an *Isolde*, a *Kundry*; for her aunt, who is her constant companion, endearingly calls her "little one."

"I beg to introduce my aunt.—Permit me." Thus the prima donna.

"Please repeat the name, little one. I failed to catch it." Thus the aunt.

THIS aunt is the prima donna's second mother and has been since Milka was a child. Ternina, unlike some others in her position, does not object to telling her age. She was born in Vezisce in December, 1863. When she was six years old she was adopted by her aunt Jurkovic, who lived in Agram, and it is this aunt who still calls her "little one." Uncle Jurkovic was a *Regierungsrath* (a government counselor), which is not quite as big in Croatia as it sounds in America. Nevertheless the uncle was a man of some importance in Agram, and distinguished people, in passing through the place, were likely to stop at his house. Thus Milka grew up among people of good breeding. The uncle, although fond of music, was anything but a Wagnerite and probably little dreamed that his niece and adopted daughter was destined to become one of the greatest interpreters of Wagner rôles. When she still was a young girl he went with her to see a performance of "Siegfried" in Munich. The music drama was new to him or he could not have been induced to so much as put his nose inside the opera house. The girl sat through the performance too deeply moved for words. Uncle Jurkovic stood it until the curtain rose on the Valkyr rock with *Brünnhilde* asleep under the tree. Then he rose. "Well," he said, "if you think I'm going to stay here until that woman stretches herself, yawns, and wakes up, you're mistaken!" So he departed, leaving Milka to see the performance out. Uncle Jurkovic may not have been a Wagnerite, but he understood how to clothe his thoughts in expressive language.



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MILKA TERNINA

MILKA'S voice was a chance discovery. Her aunt had another niece who was taking singing lessons, and Milka went with her when she called for the girl. Sometimes they arrived before the lesson was over, and when they reached home it was noticed that Milka had absorbed the instruction she had overheard and would go about the house singing her cousin's exercises. As a result, she herself became a pupil. The teacher under whom she took the first steps in her remarkable career and who first awakened the slumbering ambition within her, was named Ida Winiberger. No mention of her will be found in any musical dictionary or other book of biography, but she surely deserves this passing reference to the part she played in the life of one who was destined to become a great artist.

TERNINA—this is her real name and not a stage appellation,—was then twelve or thirteen. At fifteen she entered the Vienna conservatory, studied there for three years under Gänsbacher, and left there to secure immediately a position at Leipsic. She has been called the “blue-ribbon product” of the staid Vienna conservatory.

HER début at Leipsic was made in 1881, when she was eighteen years old, and as *Elizabeth* in “Tannhauser.” Her aunt, who never had seen her on the stage, was in the audience. When she saw her “little one” stretched out upon the bier in the last scene, she forgot that it was not Milka herself, but only *Elizabeth* who was dead, and began to cry. At Leipsic, at the very outset of her career, Ternina had an experience which has been repeated wherever she has appeared. The audience did not like her. It always has required time for her to win each successive new public. She tried for a year to overcome the prejudice of the Leipsic audiences and then resigned. She went to Graz. Hardly had she begun her engagement there than she received offers to return to Leipsic. It had been necessary for her only to leave that city, for the audiences at the opera there to realize what a great artist they had let go. But she did not return. After two years in Graz she went to Bremen, where she added, among other rôles, *Isolde* and *Brünnhilde* to her repertory. *Brünnhilde* she first sang under the conductorship of Anton Seidl. She was at Bremen until 1890, and then went to the Court Theatre, Munich. There she was so popular that when she left to tour individually or to accept star engagements, the public petitioned her to remain. As a result, she has endeavored to give a brief season to Munich every year.

HER first appearance in London was in 1895, at a Wagner concert under Herman Levi. She was brought to America by Walter Damrosch, and her American début was made with his opera company in Boston, in February, 1896. In March of the same year, and with the same company, she made her début in New York at the Academy of Music, as *Elsa*. After that she was engaged here with Grau, and also as the leading Wagner prima donna in Heinrich Conried's company at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, where she sang *Kundry* at the first performance with scenery and action, of Wagner's “Parsifal” in this country, December 24th, 1903.

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